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IR JOHN SOANE'S life, as a man, is yet to be written. It would be a strange and not uninstructive relation; and, if it can be obtained in its fulness, and free from bias, is much to be desired. In a few years it may not be possible. His career as an artist was ably sketched by a friendly hand, within a week after his funeral;* but something more concerning the architect of the Bank, and the founder of an extraordinary museum which will one day be made more available to the public than it is now, is wanted, and will be even more sought for hereafter than at this time. His architectural works are being rapidly effaced; there is no worthy engraved record of his designs; his opinions, so far as we know, are only to be found in his locked-up MS. lectures; and although so recently dead, he is positively a man unknown to the rising generation of architects.

Soane, or Soan, as he at first wrote himself (and even this, we have heard was not his right name), rose like Sir Robert Taylor, of whom we gave a notice a few weeks ago, from the humblest position to the summit of his profession; amassed a large fortune; and refused a baronetcy, perhaps to punish a son. He had much shrewdness, great ingenuity, and considerable love for art. His munificence on special occasions was unbounded, and his bequest for the relief of architects' families will keep his name in grateful remembrance long after his failings are forgotten.

With the view of placing before our readers the most important works and the principal events in his life, in few words, we shall next week give a valuable chronological statement by Mr. George Bailey (long a confidential and zealous assistant of Sir John, and now the curator of his museum), which was originally appended to Mr. Donaldson's memoir.

Mr. Tite, on Monday last, laid before the Institute of Architects, his notes of part of the course of lectures delivered by Sir John Soane to the students of the Royal Academy in 1817. He did this for three reasons: first, to recur to a period of what he considered, most successful teaching in the life of a professor who was one of the most liberal patrons of the Institute; secondly, to exhibit part of the series of drawings, used to illustrate the lectures, which he was enabled to do by the kindness of Mr. Bailey, the curator of the Soane Museum; and, thirdly, that he might urge again upon the students, the value of making notes of papers read to them. On this latter point he laid considerable stress. To use his own words:—

"I have often urged upon the students of the Institute, the advantage of taking notes and memoranda of the various papers read, and of the discussions that follow. The obvious advantages of such a proceeding, one would imagine would require no advocacy in argument,—and yet, even with the stimulus of a most handsome prize, the recommendation I have myself given so often from the chair, seems in the result to be to a considerable extent disregarded. The reasons of this appear to be, firstly, that it is much more agreeable to listen to be amused than to listen to be instructed—and next it is suggested, that the notes published in The Builder are more ably condensed than can be obtained by the student in his own way. The first reason I think probably suggests the second, and I answer that all good teaching must be real—that in our universities and schools teaching by lectures is universal; but that merely listening makes such teaching valueless; the mind wanders; the thoughts are turned aside by the object before the student; memory is imperfect, and then again the subjects, the remarks, and the opinions of the lecturer cannot be referred to with the vividness and the interest given by a memorandum made at the time. Then, again, all these reasons apply with the same or greater force, to the suggestion that the lecture or paper is reported. It may be that want of leisure or of inclination prevents the reading with attention, if at all; and the absence of the illustration, which may have been forgotten, deprives the instruction of half its value.

From all these considerations, I urge upon my young friends the advantage of making notes for themselves, in order that they may profit by the teaching; and I assure them, that though at the time they may even find the subject dry, and the exercise fatiguing, they will often be compensated in after life by the possession of facts, the importance of which they did not perceive at the moment, and that habit will make even the labour of note taking agreeable and amusing."

After alluding briefly to the principal events in Sir John Soane's life, he proceeded to say, that the scope and design of the series of lectures to which his notes referred, were the general principles and history of architecture, and its practical application. He should confine himself on the present occasion to the three first; and had to remark, that Mr. Bailey had obtained for him some extracts from the lectures themselves, to render his own notes clearer in parts. The first of these extracts shewed the intention of the lecturer.

"I shall endeavour," Soane said, "to give the result of a life of study and application in the pursuit of architectural knowledge, in plain and simple language, in the manner as, I hope, will be found most useful to the young student in our art, and the best calculated to promote a general knowledge of architecture, and a due appreciation of its extensive powers to add to the charms of society."

He combatted very strenuously the doctrine of Rousseau, propounded at Dijon, that the arts were injurious to morals, and claimed for architecture a high place amongst them, on the ground that the other arts were subservient to architectural decoration. It was necessary, however, that architects should not be mere copyists:—

"'Painting and sculpture (says Sir Henry Wotton) are two arts attending on architecture, like two of her principal gentlewomen, to dress and trim out their mistress;' and it may be added, that if the architect does not think and feel as a poet,—combine and embellish as a painter,—and execute as a sculptor, he will never reach the excellence of a Palladio, a Jones, or a Wren. Such a man may be useful as a builder, but he will never rise in his profession, above that mediocrity which the learned professor of painting* has so justly defined to be a state that art can never permit."

He agreed with Vitruvius in thinking it necessary that an architect should understand not merely geometrical drawing, but perspective. Geometry was essential to him, and arithmetic too, said Mr. Tite, as we too well know in these days. Vitruvius strongly inculcated attention to moral duties, and so did Soane as the first requisite for honourable success. In connection with this, Mr. Tite commented on what he considered our present absurd mode of payment to architects, which, if an architect did not always make his duty to his employer overrule all personal considerations, would lead to evil.

Under Colbert, an Academy of Arts was established in France; in England it was long before similar advantage was given to the arts; the Duke of Richmond's gallery and the Incorporated Society of Artists, afforded the only opportunities to artists till the establishment of the Royal Academy in the reign of George III. Tracing the history of architecture amongst the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, he described various buildings in each country. Like the pyramids of Egypt, the Mausolea of Adrian, Caius Cestus, and Cecilia Metella, although immense masses, were calculated only to contain one body. He objected to the use of caryatides in modern buildings. The application of ancient examples required judgment and taste. Nothing should be admitted that was not founded on principles. Scale made a great difference. The application of the "orders" one over the other at the Coliseum, was effective, while at Castle Ashby (the comparative smallness of which was shewn by drawings) it was absurd. Amongst instances of a bad application of ancient examples, he instanced the arch at Wilton, with the equestrian figure of Marcus Aurelius upon it, which was placed on a hill with steps up to it, so that no carriage could pass through it.

The drawing of this arch, which has been appealed to lately in connection with the preposterous conjunction at Hyde-park-corner, enabled Mr. Tite to point out how widely different the proportion of the figure to the arch was, in this example at Wilton, from that at Hyde-park-corner, and to say one more word in utter condemnation of the latter arrangement.

Returning to the architecture of the Greeks, Soane said they went to nature for their models and were right in doing so. He considered (we don't, by the way), that they derived their architecture from the wooden huts.

"The primitive huts and cabins were, according to the same writers,* formed with the trunks and branches of trees, and the roofs covered with reeds, mud, and clay; and in the Iliad we read,

"Pelides lofty tent.
Of fir the roof was raised, and cover'd o'er
With reeds, collected from the marshy shore."

Triglyphs, to be consistent with principle, should not be used inside. (?)

The finest examples of Greek art he thought perfect; he said:—

"In the temples of Minerva and Theseus, we have simplicity of form, and unity of parts, combined with fitness;—there is a grandeur and solemn majesty in them, mixed with a soft repose,—a depth of light and shade, with contrast and variety, regularity and uniformity, making together so perfect a whole as can only be surpassed by the works of the Great Architect of the Universe, who made 'this brave overhanging firmament,—this majestical roof fretted with golden fire.'"

The second lecture treated chiefly of the orders and their application in the ancient temples, the peculiarities of which were pointed out. These, he said, should be studied:—

"Although temples are now only required, and that but occasionally, in pleasure-grounds, yet such principles of beauty, proportion, and harmony, will be acquired from the study of these ancient buildings as will apply generally; the student should therefore be fully acquainted with the different forms and constructions of the temples of paganism. In them he will discover many of the great principles of art,—in them he will learn many of the laws of

* "A Review of the Professional Life of Sir John Soane, Architect, R.A., &c." By T. L. Donaldson, Hon. Sec. Institute of Architects, &c. Williams, 1837.

* Fuseli.

* Herodotus, Vitruvius, &c.

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